

Paris, May 31, 1867. 420
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Dear Wife:

It seems to me scarcely credible that I date my letter in May, so much has been crowded of travelling, novelty and sight-seeing within the last three weeks—i. e., since I left home on the 8th instant. I have sailed three thousand miles—seen whatever is visible from a railroad carriage window for a distance of two hundred miles, between Liverpool and London—stopped one night in "the capital city of the world"—~~took~~ ^{taken} a long railroad ride from ^{London to} Folkstone ~~to~~ ^{to} Boulogne—crossed the Channel to Boulogne—traversed a wide sweep of French territory from Boulogne to Paris—and seen as much of Paris and its environs, including the Grand Exposition, as the most diligent pains-taking could possibly achieve. It is hard to persuade myself that all this is not the panoramic vision of a dream; for dreams have often a vividness not surpassed by any experience in our waking hours. I have been able to accomplish all the more here, in consequence of Harry's thorough knowledge of whatever in Paris is worth seeing; so, following his directions, it is impossible to go amiss, and no time is lost. I shall not attempt to narrate where I have been, or what I have seen. Whatever is possible of human skill, contrivance, invention, and artistic skill in every branch of human industry, is here to be found, and there is no end to one's admiration and wonder. Especially is this true of the vast and astonishing variety of things to be seen at the Exposition.

I have spent several days in wandering through its multitudinous but admirably arranged avenues—(Fanny and Frank always, and Harry often with me)—and the half has not yet been reached. I doubt whether I shall be able to examine the whole of it before leaving for London on the 14th of June. The poorest display is made by our own country; for, excepting half a dozen creditable paintings, and one or two locomotives, and some agricultural implements, there is nothing worth looking at. Indeed, it is useless for the United States to attempt to compete with the old world in anything but our free institutions and the general condition of the people. Ultimately, we shall be able in all things to take perhaps the highest rank.

I wish I could have you with me to take rides through the wonderful avenues of the city and the various extensive parks, that you might see miles of palatial buildings, equipages of every description, and hundreds of thousands ^{of people} constantly in the open air, sitting in social groups, or taking their lunch at little round tables, and enjoying themselves in all sorts of ways. The spectacle would be bewildering to you, and in the evening the effect would be nothing short of enchantment.

A teetotaler here is a rare person. Beer and ale and wine are here consumed in large quantities; yet, strange to say, out of the endless throng I have seen, only two have been in a staggering condition.

We have had nothing stronger, of course, at our own little table, than tea and cold water; for Harry is as abstemious as any of us, and has not once indulged in smoking a cigar. He has had one or two attacks of neuralgic headache, but these have been short, and comparatively slight. He is very industrious with his pen, writing letters for the Chicago Tribune; but so few of what he sends are printed, that I should think he would get quite disgusted or discouraged. A letter from his aunt, at Munich, says his father remains about the same, but as soon as he is able will go to some watering-place for his health. She intimates that Harry must hold himself in constant readiness for a summons home.

Fanny will go with me to England. It is surprising that neither marriage nor a European residence has made the slightest alteration in her personal appearance. She is as youthful as she was under our roof, and in all things apparently the same. Equally is this true of Frank, except that there is a ^{little} more down upon his cheeks in the shape of an incipient beard. We are all in excellent health, except that, for some days past, I have been somewhat hoarse. Harry will remain here after we leave, (unless called to Munich,) and on our return will accompany us to Switzerland — say, by the first of August.

I have scarcely seen an American since I came, so as to recognize him. I met Senator Doolittle at Bowler, Great Ho., on his way to St. Petersburg, on a governmental mission of some kind. He is a coarse looking man, of the Andy Johnson type; and, recent as he has proved himself to the cause of freedom in our country, I was not disposed to prolong my accidental interview with him. No doubt he will be flatteringly received by the Russians; for they have a singular liking for Americans, no matter who they are.

Sarah Remond called to see me the other day, but, to my regret, I was absent. Fanny, however, was at home, and learned from her that she had been residing in Florence for some months past. We reciprocated her visit last evening, but was told she had just gone out. A short distance from the house we met Mrs. Putnam and her sons, and were warmly greeted by them. I am to see Sarah to-morrow forenoon. She does not fancy Paris, Mrs. Putnam said, and will return to London next week.

I wrote to George Thompson last week, but have got no letter from him as yet. Mr. and Mrs. Snow (who are with us at this hotel) inform me that, before they left London, he seemed to be very much depressed, and looking and feeling very differently from what he did on shipboard.

I fear family matters are at the bottom of this. Probably the death of Herbert has made Mrs. Thompson more querulous and morbid than ever. It is strange he does not answer my letter.

I have been out to Saint Cloud, the Emperor's summer residence, where are beautiful parks, and had a very enjoyable time of it with Fanny and Frank. I have not attempted to see either the Emperor or the Empress, except incidentally on going to the Exposition, when it was announced he would review a regiment of sharpshooters just opposite; but his little boy had to appear as his substitute. The review, in itself, was a mere farce. Nearly all the crowned heads of Europe are soon to be here, including the King of Prussia, with the redoubtable Count Bismark, and several oriental grandees and rulers. Next Sunday is to be signalized by a great horse-race, and in the evening by a magnificent illumination of the garden and water-works at Versailles. There is no very perceptible difference between Sunday here and any other day, except that it is still more given to amusement and recreation. People observe it as they please - work or play, and they do both. Very few, comparatively, especially of the men, attend church.

We have been made glad by a letter from William, of the 13th inst., and another from Ellie. I am rejoiced to be assured that you are bearing my absence bravely, and getting along hopefully. Keeping up your spirits, my dear, to the end, remembering that the time is rapidly passing, and that it will not be long before we may be permitted to rejoice together at Rockledge, having Fanny and Frank with us.

Ever, dearest, your own, W.L.G.

Dear Mother: Father had to break off suddenly and start on his trip over to the other side of the city in company with Fanny and the Snows. He left me to make an appropriate ending to his letter and to fill out this sheet as I chose. Father is looking and feeling much better than when I left home and I think that this excursion ^{across the water} will do him great good. Although he has been in Paris nearly two weeks he has hardly begun to see the sights and I fear that when he goes to England he will not have done more than skimmed the city and Exposition. However, he may get the cream. We shall probably break up our quarters here two weeks from to-day and go to London. Harry will remain in Paris. Direct letters to us to Mr. Chesson's care, London Morning Star office, till further notice, and let us hear from you often. Lovingly, Frank.